



Review of The Singer of the "Eclogues."

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farce, violence, and song, the lost Apollodorus may become a last resort for believers in Attic austerity. According to L.'s generic study, "Versuch einer Typologie des römischen Dramas,"¹¹ New Comedy is distinguished by its objective view of life (*Weltdeutung*) and rigorous formal structure; but the *Weltbild* of L.'s reconstruction does not go beyond recognition of human error and justifying the ways of Tyche to men, while the rigor is greater than that of any extant comedy. This is not to deny the many symmetries and responsions of the well-designed action of the *Phormio* (noted by Steidle), but L. has made symmetry into an axiom from which he deduces on architectural principles a confirmation of his reconstructed model, incorporating the delayed return of Antipho and the reconciliation sequence of his finale (pp. 79–87; note the final diagram p. 88).

L. leaves aside the fragments of Apollodorus, but they will serve as a useful corrective. Of the non-Donatus quotations from the Carystian, five are from Athenaeus, including two references to types of food and drink and two topical wisecracks about the Parasite Chaerephon. The longest excerpt, twenty-seven lines from the *Grammatidiopoios*, combines abuse of Tyche for her lack of Greek sophistication in driving men to war with a proposal for a better world in which young men would be drafted for national service at parties and Athens' allies would provide the catering; the speaker and addressee both seem to be *hetaerae*. Does this show austere concern with relevance to the action or the true nature of humanity?¹² Another fragment hinting at domestic scandal comes from the *Diabolos* or *Slanderer* (cf. Plaut. *Asin.* 810–11) and is addressed to a Phormio. This name, borne by a famous parasite of Seleucus I, was chosen by Apollodorus for his hero in the *Epidikazomenos* (cf. Donat. *Praef.*), suggesting that his central character was both a public intriguer and a perpetual diner-out. The Carystian seems tolerant enough of stage clichés to have welcomed into his *Epidikazomenos* the more theatrical scenes which L. fathers on Terence.

It is not that L. does less than justice to Terence or fails to appreciate a brilliant piece of theater like the cross-purpose dialogue of the *senes* in front of Nausistrata at *Phormio* 796–815. He offers many perceptive comments on Terence's aims and effects, but he is serious out of turn, and he has reconstructed an Attic comedy that is neither credible nor entertaining. And, paradoxically, L.'s excessive respect for Apollodorus has attributed to Terence a greater independence in the adaptation than would have been needed to compose the "original" play.

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11. *Das römische Drama*, pp. 1–90.

12. More concern with Tyche and the realities of youth and age is shown in the fifteen fragments attributed by Stobaeus to "Apollodorus," but both Athenaeus and Photius seem to differentiate between the Carystian and another, presumably Athenian, *komodopoios*; cf. Athen. 1. 3C with 1. 34D.

The Singer of the "Eclogues." By PAUL ALPERS. Berkeley–Los Angeles–London: University of California Press, 1979. Pp. xi + 253. \$16.00.

Here is another book on Virgil's *Eclogues*, this one by a scholar outside the actual field of classical studies; as such, its aims are distinct: "it has become

painfully clear to me that the *Eclogues* are virtually unknown except to Classicists . . . I have therefore done my best to make the *Eclogues* accessible to any serious reader of poetry, even those who know no Latin" (p. 1). The *Eclogues* are poems which have attracted a great deal of scholarly activity in recent years, and such a project is obviously desirable.

Three chapters of interpretation are preceded by a text (that of the OCT, with one departure, incorrect I believe, at 6. 33: *exordia* for *ex omnia*) and new translation. This is, on the whole, thoroughly readable without sacrificing precision, although these are difficult, perhaps impossible, poems to translate to full satisfaction, and some may find the idiom unpleasing. A few objections: "significant" epithets or proper names are at times omitted, with the apparent implication that they are mere ornaments (e.g., 9. 47 *Dionaei*, 10. 12 *Aganippe*, 10. 50 *Chalcidico*). Along the same lines, the names of certain shepherds are altered, "where the originals created metrical difficulties" (p. ix). So Amaryllis (perhaps the most sonorous named figure in the collection) becomes Phyllis in 2, Alcippe in 3 (but remains herself in 1, 8, and 9). Apart from aesthetic objections, the fact is that Virgil does not always name his shepherds idly, and such tampering may conceal intended relationships. Embracing both objections: *Lyctius Aegon* (5. 72) appears simply as *Palaemon*. The only actual errors I found were a conflation at 5. 35 ("ipsa Pales agros atque ipse reliquit Apollo" = "Apollo, god of shepherds, left the fields") and at 8. 26: "quid non speremus amantes?" = "What can we lovers look for?"—inadvertently reading *nos* for *non*?

Alpers' primary concern is the varying "modes" of the *Eclogues*. The first chapter, "*Eclogue* 1: An Introduction to Virgilian Pastoral," examines this poem from a number of different viewpoints: the degree to which its nature is either dramatic or lyric, the relationship between Tityrus and Meliboeus, and so forth. In minimizing the dramatic or agonistic qualities that some have seen in this eclogue, he opposes the "pessimistic" interpreters who see in the fate of Meliboeus and the supposed callous unconcern of Tityrus an inherent criticism on the part of Virgil. This is replaced not by the old "positive" school; rather the characters are representatives of various possibilities: "these shepherds bear witness to wider experience and general truths out of the particular pressures of their characters and situations" (p. 92). In this, as elsewhere, A. is in line with the salutary and balanced criticism found in W. R. Johnson's *Darkness Visible*.

The next chapter, "The Pastoral Character of the *Eclogues*," is an attempt to define the nature and mode of the amoebaeon poems. Essentially the question here seems to be one of genre: why did Virgil choose this form of poetry? A. is fairly perceptive in pursuing the poet's intent in these eclogues: "It seems to me plausible that Theocritus' shepherd-singer suggested to Virgil a way of engaging larger problems, themes, and ambitions without forsaking the sense that poetic authenticity unavoidably involved some degree of lyric presence on the poet's part . . ." (p. 114). His inquiry is perhaps most successful in a comparison (without judgment) between Theocritus *Idylls* 11 and *Eclogues* 2. As A. sees him, "Corydon thinks of himself in a tradition of pastoral singing and in a community of pastoral singers" (p. 118), while Polyphemus lacks any such "sense of community." From this we can see a new attitude toward pastoral poetry.

In this chapter, and to some extent throughout the book, A. speaks in terms

of "suspension" ("keeping the reader attentive and doubtful"), a feature he sees as central to the *Eclogues*. It is applied to the conclusion of *Eclogues* 1, defining the lack of thematic resolution (l. 79 "*hic tamen hanc mecum poteras requiescere noctem*"). Here the term is a useful one, but its application elsewhere appears to be rather loose, and one is left somewhat confused at times: at the end of *Eclogues* 6, "our judgment of the ironies remains suspended" (p. 102); *Olympo* (6. 86) is "a final suspension" (p. 103)—gods or sky? There is a "suspension of judgment" at the close of *Eclogues* 3 (p. 105); suspension inherent in the bucolic convention (p. 115); "grammatical and rhetorical suspensions" in *Eclogues* 8 (p. 133). On the whole, however, the book is relatively free of jargon.

The final chapter, "Virgil's Higher Mode," is, I think, the most interesting. It treats the ways in which the poet, particularly in *Eclogues* 4, 5, 6, and 10, goes "beyond the normal range of pastoral" (p. 155). Although this is not in itself a new quest, A. does bring to it some novel methodology. For instance, he applies to the examination of pastoral Schiller's distinction between the "naïve" and the "sentimental" (pp. 204–49). Virgil belongs to the latter category, particularly in his "composing" of Theocritus and in his creation of a self-representation which transcends and reforms the pastoral of Theocritus. Problems arise, however, when this dichotomy is applied in full. "Theocritus' naïve bucolics have the same strength in relation to the *Eclogues* as Homer's naïve epics have in relation to the *Aeneid*" (p. 207). This equation, essentially as old as Servius and doubtless older, is flawed. For, admittedly in ways very different, Theocritean pastoral had itself already emerged from the "naïve" (*Id.* 7, with its complex set of actors, is a good example), and clearly Virgil read him for what he was—a sophisticated Alexandrian. If his poetry contains "heroic and mythic elements" (p. 204), such elements are hardly parallel in nature to those appearing in the Homeric poems; in other words, there is, already in Theocritus, a studied relationship between poet and subject. A lack of "naïvety" (in this genre, the assumption of a self-conscious relationship between the poet and his singers) is, after all, a virtual prerequisite in the writing of pastoral poetry (and hence its Alexandrian genesis?). If these terms are to apply, what we need is a distinction in levels of "sentimentality." Here Eliot's categorization of Virgilian "maturity" is perhaps more to the point. At his most self-conscious, Virgil is closest to the manners of the West.

Theocritus aside, this procedure does lead A. to some interesting observations on the nature of Virgilian pastoral. So, for instance, his treatment of the questioning of the pastoral convention in *Eclogues* 10 (pp. 235–38), taking us to the "borders of Arcadia." Or again, on the "importance of the shepherd, alert to concrete experience and home truths, but diffident and conscious of his limited powers" (p. 245). The book ends with a few pages on the mode of the *Eclogues* in relation to that of the *Aeneid*.

The criticisms which follow should not be seen as implying that Virgilian studies should remain the arcane right of the classicist alone; however, they will perhaps indicate some further complexities involved in reaching a full understanding of these difficult and elusive poems.

When we read in *Lycidas*, "But not the praise, / Phoebus repli'd and touch't my trembling ears" (76–77), our reading will be enriched, but perhaps little more,

if we recognize the Virgilian reference (6. 3–4 “cum canerem reges et proelia, Cynthus aurem / vellit et admonuit . . .”). Essentially the tradition in this case is inert. But when a critic does not recognize, or does not acknowledge, the source of these lines of Virgil (Callim. *Aet.* 1 frag. 1. 21–22) and then proceeds with interpretation (“Phoebus represents part of the poet’s mind, much as *nostra Thalea* personifies ‘my poetry’” [p. 100]—which in itself may be quite acceptable), then we may well feel that he has neglected an important formative aspect. With a poet such as Virgil, it is not sufficient to consider the transformation of his formal source only (in the case of the *Eclogues*, Theocritus). For the Virgilian synthesis is one which accommodates a variety of traditions. The name of Callimachus appears once, in passing, in A.’s study (p. 242), that of Apollonius not at all (admittedly the latter is not of great importance in the *Eclogues*, but A.’s reference to 6. 31–40 as the “most important Lucretian imitation in the *Eclogues*” [p. 242] should be tempered with at least a citation of *Arg.* 1. 496–502). On the Latin side the influence of Calvus’ *Io* on 6. 47–52 is missed (pp. 125, 130). These may seem minor objections, but they do point to a central fact of the *Eclogues*: their appearance often belies their actual nature.

In the light of A.’s purposes, as well as his own scholarly pursuits, it is perhaps unreasonable to expect complete familiarity with the Virgilian bibliography (a daunting prospect even for the specialist in Virgil), but the fact is that such omissions do cause difficulties. It is astonishing to read an account of Gallus, love, and pastoralism in the Tenth Eclogue without even a reference to Ross’ *Backgrounds to Augustan Poetry* (works appearing two and three years later are referred to by A.). The reference to “Gallus, who was, in fact, well known as a poet” (p. 127) suggests (as does discussion of the eclogue) that the author is unaware of the issues relating to this figure. We miss reference to Wagenvoort on the force of *ludere* (pp. 77, 109–10), Bowersock and others on pages 132 and 157 (“C. Asinius Pollio . . . to whom *Eclogue* 8 is also addressed”), Reitzenstein and Ross again on the point of *tenuis* (p. 76). By the same token, he accepts a certain amount of silliness by critics ancient (Servius, p. 187) and modern (Rose on the golden age *thauasia* of *Ecl.* 4. 21: “In Georgics III. 316 he [Virgil] says that goats normally come home of their own accord; it is therefore not a miracle nor a characteristic of the Golden Age that they do so here”; we no longer read the *Georgics* as a manual of caprine activities).

A.’s philological control is on the whole very good, although there are a few lapses: page 102, “the extraordinary enjambment *beatus / audiit*” (6. 82–83); page 144, a rather confused attitude toward sequence of tenses; page 170, on 4. 30, “*et durae quercus sudabunt roscida mella*. The word order is transparent not only as a matter of grammar (subject-verb-object), but also in relation to the phenomenon rendered.”

In spite of these qualifications, this is an interesting study, with a number of useful observations, which, although at times rather diffuse, may attract the nonspecialist in particular to a consideration of Virgil’s book of *Eclogues*.

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